United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council and Secretary-General condemn killing of seven Indian peace-keepers in militia attack on convoy in Somalia.

+ UNAMIR reports successful transition as French troops complete withdrawal from Rwanda protected zone; closure of Zaire border causes some tension.

+ Secretary-General, addressing Preparatory Committee for Social Summit, says United Nations cannot be force for peace without being force for development; seeks international strategy to guarantee human security.

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Security Council President Yuliy Vorontsov (Russian Federation) and Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today strongly condemned the killing of seven Indian soldiers serving with the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II). The peace-keepers were escorting a convoy from Baledogle to Baidoa this morning when they were ambushed by unidentified militia using heavily-armed "technical" vehicles. Another nine Indian soldiers were injured in the incident, three of them critically.

In a statement to correspondents, President Vorontsov said the members of the Security Council had been stunned by news of the killings, and described the attack as treacherous and cowardly. He noted that the Council would discuss the Secretary-General's recent report on Somalia tomorrow.

The Secretary-General said the ambush appeared to have been premeditated and highly coordinated. He pointed out that the peace-keepers were helping Somalis to rebuild their political institutions and to achieve peace and stability.

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The United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) today formally took control of the southwestern protected zone following the withdrawal of French troops and the conclusion of Operation Turquoise. The occasion was

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marked with a ceremony at Cyangugu airport. A United Nations spokesman said the transition was smooth, notwithstanding tensions resulting from the closure of the border with Zaire over the weekend and continuing humanitarian concerns.

The spokesman said that there were 100,000 to 150,000 displaced persons in the protected zone, and that 50,000 had massed in Cyangugu after the border was closed. However, the day was quiet in the zone and in the country as a whole, and humanitarian agencies described the situation as stable.

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The United Nations cannot be a strong force for peace unless it is also a strong force for development, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Addressing the Preparatory Committee for the 1995 World Summit for Social Development at Headquarters today, he said peace was no longer threatened by conflicts between States so much as by social and economic problems. "Territorial security has been largely guaranteed. But human security is in crisis," he stressed.

Individual States could not solve such problems as environmental degradation, the spread of diseases and international crime, the Secretary-General continued. States also had to contend with social disintegration and the crisis of values caused by rapid economic and technological change. He warned of the danger posed by extremist, separatist or factional leaders who directed the anger of disaffected communities into political channels; they held Governments responsible for joblessness, economic insecurity and inadequate social protection systems.

The Secretary-General said the Summit, to be held in Copenhagen next March, should produce an international strategy for social development. It should aim for such specific targets as: halving the proportion of people living in poverty; creating jobs and sustainable livelihoods; and reducing disparities among income classes, sexes, ethnic groups, geographical regions and nations. Economic growth was a means to an end, not an end in itself. It should be equitably distributed and empower people, not marginalize them.

The United Nations must be more than an international platform for political debate, the Secretary-General went on to say. With its uniquely strong and diverse development system, the Organization must provide an integrated and effective support system for sustainable human development.

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